

**Town of Barrington
Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2016**

Members Present:

Matthew Amaral, Robert Humm, Mark Etheridge, Jim Sanderson, Buddy Violet and Dick Wilbur. Members absent: Joan Warren. Also present: Member of the Public Mr. Patrick O'Mahoney.

1. Call to Order at 7:06 PM
2. March 10 Minutes were approved unanimously with one small amendment.
3. Chair Rob Humm reminded the meeting that we would be meeting on May 19 with Town of Barrington Town Manager Peter DeAngelis, and at our June meeting with Town of Bristol Economic Development officer Jessica Pfaumler.
4. The Meeting turned to a discussion of Main Street America, a network of towns across the country sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. According to its webpage, the Main Street America movement is "... the leading voice for preservation-based economic development and community revitalization across the country. Made up of small towns, mid-sized communities, and urban commercial districts, **Main Street America**™ represents the broad diversity that makes this country so unique. Working together, the programs that make up the Main Street America network help to breathe new life into the places people call home." Since the EDC's last meeting, Chair Humm and member Matt Amaral (in his capacity as president of the Barrington Business Association) attended a meeting with Main Street America representatives organized by the East Bay Chamber of Commerce (EBCC) to learn more about what Main Street America could do to help the communities of Barrington, Warren and Bristol in promoting the area as a business destination. Main Street America apparently offers grants and expertise to help towns improve the historic look and certain business- friendly aspects of town planning, including parking improvements. Matt offered to follow up with the EBCC to learn more about a possible three-town effort to engage with Main Street America.
5. Next, the Meeting discussed the pros and cons of Barrington becoming a member of the East Bay Chamber of Commerce. EBCC's Marketing Director, Christine O'Connor, has approached all three East Bay towns to consider becoming members. EDC members asked what the benefits to the Town would be. Two members, Matt and Mark, had joined as local businesspeople,

but had let membership lapse because at the time they did not feel membership benefits were worth the membership costs. However, all agreed that Christine O'Connor has been making strides to revive excitement across the three towns and to seek out ways to make membership more attractive. Buddy shared his experience that chambers of commerce often end up representing the needs of their biggest members and sponsors. Members agreed that more information was needed before the EDC could definitively recommend to the Town Council that the Town join the EBCC.

6. The Meeting next returned to its ongoing discussion of Food Trucks, reviewing ordinances developed by the City of Providence and other towns in the State. All agreed that the new Providence regulations are straightforward and clear, and Jim argued convincingly that any Barrington ordinance - on Food Trucks, Signage or other issues - ought to be drafted with the same clarity in mind. Chairman Humm clarified that our goal is two-fold: to decide whether the EDC believes hosting food trucks in town is a good or bad thing for the community; and, if yes, how best to regulate them. As this is at least the fourth meeting in which the issue has been discussed, he noted his intention to call a vote on the two questions at the May EDC Meeting.
7. Signage: The Meeting next turned to another recurring topic, signage for new and existing businesses. Our purpose is not to revise the existing Town ordinances but to comment on specific ways in which the EDC believes the signage approval process could/should be streamlined, and to leave the re-writing of relevant ordinances to appropriate offices or committees. The Meeting, therefore, discussed a possible way forward: agreeing on recommendations to the Town Council, including that the Zoning Committee review the current ordinances and processes and take into consideration specific, forthcoming EDC recommendations on how to simplify the signage process for the benefit of new and existing businesses. As the May Meeting will be taken up exclusively with a conversation with Town Manager Peter DeAngelis, Chairman Humm noted that the EDC will focus on signage issues in the June meeting.
8. Dates for the next few meetings were agreed upon, and Rob reiterated that meetings will be held as long as we have a quorum. The EDC will next meet on: May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, November 17 and December 15, 2016. At the May 19 Meeting members will vote on Food Truck issues.
9. During Open discussion, Dick informed the Meeting of the upcoming 2nd Annual Barrington Arts Festival, which will be held at Town Hall/the Public Library grounds on Sunday, June 12. Mark noted that the organizers had reached out to him as a local restaurateur and that he had agreed to spread the word further among other brick and mortar restaurants to ensure that the local food sector took advantage of this community event. Buddy brought up

the issue of having the EDC and Town Council coordinate a business development educational seminar to provide local businesses with information regarding services and resources available to them in Rhode Island. There was general agreement that this was an idea the EDC ought to champion. Matt, in his role as president of the Barrington Business Association, agreed that local businesses would likely welcome such an event from the Town Council. Rob, who is currently participating in LeadershipRI, noted that he and fellow East Bay participants have been tasked with developing a promotional video, and asked for ideas of events or activities in Barrington that ought to be included in such a video. Various members provided initial feedback, and agreed to email him other ideas offline. A member asked whether the EDC had been provided an official email address yet by the Town. Rob and Dick promised to enquire about this.

10. The Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.